

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 01304 300102Z

ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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BRUSSELS FOR EEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB

SUBJECT: JAMES RAMAN AND THE ARO

1. IN ANTICIPATION OF HIS IMMINENT VISIT TO THE U.S.
UNDER AN IVP GRANT, SUMMARIZED BELOW ARE POINTS MADE BY
JAMES RAMAN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FIJI TRADE UNION
CONGRESS (FTUCL) DURING RECENT CONVERSATION WITH
THE AMBASSADOR.

A. RAMAN TOOK PRIDE IN THE SUPPORT HE FOUND IN THE
RECENT ICFTU ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION MEETING IN
BANGKOK WHERE HE COMPLAINED AGAINST THE NEW ZEALAND
AND AUSTRALIAN FEDERATIONS OF LABOR FOR THEIR DIRECT
SOLIDARITY WITH THE FIJIAN DOCKWORKERS UNION STRIKE IN
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PAGE 02 SUVA 01304 300102Z

JULY 1977 WITHOUT PRIOR CONTACT AND CONSULTATION WITH
FTUC. RAMAN EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD HAVE HAD VERY
LITTLE REASON TO COMPLAIN IF THE SOLIDARITY WAS
CONFINED TO NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIAN DOCKWORKERS'
UNIONS, BUT THE FAILURE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES NATIONAL
CENTERS TO CONSULT WITH FTUC WAS A BREACH OF A BIT MORE
THAN ETIQUETTE IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONAL LABOR

CENTERS WHICH BELONG TO THE SAME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION (ICFTU-ARO).

B. RAMAN WENT ON TO SAY THAT BOB HAWK OF AUSTRALIA BEARS NO ILL FEELINGS BECAUSE OF FIJI'S COMPLAINT IN ARO AND IN FACT HAWK SAID AS MUCH AT THE BANGKOK MEETING, I.E. HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR CENTER SHOULD HAVE FIRST CONTACTED THE FTUC BEFORE EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY FOR THE STRIKE AND SUPPORTING THE BOYCOTT OF FIJI CARGO BY THE AUSTRALIAN DOCKWORKERS. WITH REGARD TO THE NEW ZEALANDERS, RAMAN FELT THAT THERE WAS A BIT OF RESENTMENT THERE BECAUSE THE NZ LABOR LEADERS BEING OLDER AND HAVING PLAYED A ROLE IN THE GROWTH OF FTUC ARE INCLINED TO BE LESS TOLERANT TOWARDS SIGNS OF INDEPENDENCE AND ASSERTIVENESS BY YOUNG MEN LIKE REMAN.

C. RAMAN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT FITZSIMMONS, THE LEADER OF THE NEW ZEALAND DOCKWORKERS' UNION ACCEPTED THE FIJI COMPLAINT AND HAS OFFERED TO ASSIST THE FTUC AFFILIATE DOCKWORKERS UNION WITH FUNDS HE HAD AVAILABLE FROM INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FEDERATION (ITF). HE IS IN FACT PREPARED TO ENDORSE THE FIJI DOCKWORKERS' UNION APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATION WITH THE ITF.

D. ASKED ABOUT HIS IMPRESSIONS OF ARO, RAMAN WAS OUSPOKEN IN HIS PRAISE OF THE NEW SPIRIT AND DRIVE WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 SUVA 01304 300102Z

ARO'S NEW PRESIDENT HAS INSPIRED. HE CAME AWAY FROM THE BANGKOK MEETING FULL OF HOPE THAT THE ARO IS OFF TO A NEW START OF ACTIVITIES AND INFLUENCES IN THE AREA WHICH PROMISES TO MAKE ICFTU'S REGIONAL ORGANIZATION A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE BODY WITH REALISTIC OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS.

E. RAMAN CITED SPECIFICALLY THE DOWNGRADING OF NEW DEHLI ARO COLLEGE WHICH HAD BECOME A ROUTINE TRAINING CENTER PRIMARILY FOR INDIAN TRADE UNIONS AS ILLUSTRATION OF THE CAREFUL LOOK THE ARO IS TAKING AT ITS ACTIVITIES UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT. ACCORDING TO RAMAN THE ARO TRAINING ACTIVITIES ARE NOW CENTERED IN SINGAPORE AND ARE REDESIGNED IN THE FORM OF TRAINING COURSES TO BE ORGANIZED IN THE COUNTRY OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND AIMED AT SPECIFIC TARGETS AS DEFINED BY EACH ARO AFFILIATE.

2. COMMENT: THE MORE WE SEE OF JAMES RAMAN THE MORE CONVINCED WE BECOME THAT SOME DAY RAMAN WILL FOLLOW THE STEPS OF HIS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR IN FTUC (MOHAMED RAMZAN) I.E. ENTER GOF AS MINISTER.

CONDON

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